May 2018

Dear Parents of Freshmen,

After classes end on Wednesday, May 23rd, members of the freshman class will be participating in a five-day culminating project. We’re writing to introduce you to the project, provide you with the schedule, and ask for your help in making the project successful.

The goal of the 9th grade EOY (End-Of-Year) project is for students to break out of the “MA Bubble” and establish connections with our local community. Marin Academy’s mission asks students to “think, question, and create” and “challenges each person to accept the responsibilities posed by education in a democratic society.” To that end, our EOY project is designed to take students beyond the walls of our classrooms and out into the San Rafael community to explore both the issues facing our community as well as the good work concerned citizens are currently doing to address them.

During the five days, from Thursday, May 24–Thursday, May 31, ninth graders will work collaboratively in teams to explore an issue that challenges the city of San Rafael: economic inequity, food scarcity, access to health care, education, affordable housing, and access to both urban and open spaces. During the mornings, students will be participating in a service learning project that helps them understand the theme to which they have been assigned. In the afternoon, students will engage in the creative process to demonstrate and reflect on what they have learned through a project that pushes them in four areas: awareness, empathy, engagement, and action. Through their service and project, students will not only be able to identify local issues, but will work to understand the ways in which these challenges are interconnected on both a personal and institutional level. They will also learn about ways to take meaningful action to address social justice issues. We hope that by the end of the week, they feel inspired to continue to seek out ways to engage in their own local communities.

Please know that participation in this culminating project is mandatory; this End-of-the-Year Project is a graduation requirement. Students will be assessed on a Credit / Non-Credit basis, and this information will appear on both a student’s transcript and final report card of the year. They will also be given feedback on the ways in which they have engaged in the work, both in and out of the classroom. Please avoid scheduling doctor, dentist, or other appointments during this time; not only do we see this as a valuable experience for each student, but the collaborative nature of this project is dependent on all students being able to rely on each other. Students should expect approximately one hour’s worth of homework each night.

Finally, 9th graders should arrive at school each day by 8:30 a.m., and they will be finished each day by 3:00 p.m. Buses will run on the regular schedule, except on the last day (Thursday, May 31) when all buses will depart MA at 1:15 p.m. The school cafeteria will be serving breakfast and lunch during the end-of-the-
year projects, and on the last day, students will attend a free all-school barbeque to celebrate the end of this school year.

Ultimately, we hope that students deepen their understanding of the local community, increase their empathy, and see first-hand the power of community action. We believe students will gain just as much as they give during the course of this week of intensive community focus. We look forward to venturing into our wider community and returning to MA with a heightened sense of purposeful citizenship.

Sincerely,

KaTrina Wentzel, Academic Dean
Pam Maffei and Cheyenne Robertson, 9th Grade EOY Coordinators